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Congo News Letter

Christmas Number

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CONGO NEWS LETTER

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CHRISTMAS NUMBER

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Congo News Letter

CHRISTIANS, LO, THE STAR APPEARETH

Christians, lo, the star appeareth:
Lo, 'tis yet Messiah's day;
Still with tribute treasure laden
Come the wise men on their way.

Where a life is spent in service
Walking where the Master trod,
There is scattered myrrh most fragrant
For the blessed Christ of God.

Who so bears his brother's burden,
Who so shares another's woe,
Brings his frankincense to Jesus
With the men of long ago.

When we soothe earth's weary children,
Tending best the least of them,
'Tis the Lord himself we worship,
Bringing gold to Bethlehem.

Christians, lo, the star appeareth,
Leading still the ancient way:
Christians, onward with your treasure:
It is still Messiah's day.

PIERRE'S CHRISTMAS

"*Yeto antinu a nsi zanda...*"
"We three kings of Orient are..."

THE voices of the three little kings quavered, then gathering courage and volume, rang out more clearly, as proudly their owners marched up the aisle of the Banza Manteke church, bearing their gifts aloft for all to see. Their brown faces were shiny with perspiration — for in Congo, on a Christmas Sunday evening, one is likely to be very hot, especially when one's heart is beating unusually fast from excitement and one is clothed in unaccustomed long robes with one's head tightly encased in a crown of gold paper holding in place a head covering of purple sateen. All of this, however, small Pierre Makengele did not mind one bit, if only he could get through his solo verse without forgetting that last line: -

"*Mbula tuntambika.*"

There, it was sung. Now he could let himself go as the others joined with him in the joyful chorus: "*E ntetembwa mu ntemo, do.*" His eyes were aglow — oh, it was wonderful to be marching up in front of all his neighbors and playmates, singing this lovely song and carrying a beautiful gift to His King ! To be sure, it was really a "pretend" gift, but it was a colorful box and he did have a whole franc (2 cents) in his pocket to place in the manger of the Christ Child afterwards, when the whole congregation would file up, each one to present his Christmas offering.

Now he was on the platform, kneeling with the other two kings and placing his gift box before the manger, on the other side of which were grouped the shepherds, while behind the curtains there waited restlessly the little angels, gay in their bright-colored costumes of crepe paper with a matching band of the same material on each kinky head. They were adorable — these small, brown children, presenting the Christmas story in pantomine, song and verse, and Pierre was certainly the happiest among them, his eyes alight with joy and excitement.

Soon they were rising; all were singing: "Oh, come all ye faithful;" it was time to slip behind the others and reach under his robes for his franc as the worshippers pressed forward to the manger. It was over — all these happy weeks of rehearsing and singing and joyful anticipation; the morning service in the palm-decorated church with the choir singing special anthems and the pastor giving a specially long sermon; and now the crowning event of the children's pageant — it was all over.

But no, everything was not over — the words and tune were still ringing in his ears and in his heart — and say ! tomorrow would be Christmas day and there would be more singing early in the morning at the six o'clock service, and after that the distribution of gifts by the missionaries — oh, maybe he would receive that most cherished of all possessions, a ball, a large, red ball, perhaps, or, if not a ball, then a harmonica. That would be almost as good — to be able to play music all day long and put on the new shirt or suit he was almost certain to receive; for hadn't all the children of station workers been given a new dress or a suit every Christmas ? Oh, he could hardly wait for the next morning !

But even that would not be the end; for later that morning there would be more singing — at the hospital where he could at least hear them, even if he could not be inside to watch the brief service and the distribution of small gifts to the patients. For was he not the son of the head nurse and did he not live right by the hospital, you might say ? Yes, and he might even be fortunate enough to jump on the mission truck when it left, after that, to take Dr. Freas and Miss Ehnbom, the nurse, to the leper colony for another Christmas service and more distribution of gifts.

Oh, it would be a wonderful day, with games for everybody in the afternoon over on the football field. The tug of war — he did not know it was called that, — but it was always the best game of all; one time for the big boys, another for the smaller ones. Maybe he might even be on the side that won and receive a bright new pencil or a notebook as a prize ! There was no end to Pierre's happy thoughts — they just kept tumbling one after the other through his active little brain. And he knew that after all this was over, the missionaries would gather in one of their houses for their Christmas dinner, while he and his brothers and sisters would

wend their way homewards, where they would find all the tables from the nearby houses placed end to end to make a long, festive board outside and, from everyone's cook house would come the savory smell of rice and greens, beans and, he hoped, some goat meat, all cooking, and gravy made with palm oil — ummmm,— his mouth was watering already — how could he ever wait !

If only his cousin Gaston in the village might be there for this fun — and all the children in the other villages he knew — they said there were even some in farther-away villages who did not know about Christmas and the Christ Child ! But maybe that would be expecting too much to have a little boy's thoughts go that far afield during this exciting time. Maybe that is just the missionary who is trying to put on paper what his thoughts might be !

Anyway we know there are lots of boys and girls in Congo who are happy at Christmas and other times, too, because friends in America cared enough to send the Good News and their many gifts to Africa. Let us hope and pray that they will not only keep on doing this but also increase their efforts so that *all* the children in *all* the villages in *all* the world may have the same happy privilege of knowing the Christ Child and of observing HIS HAPPY BIRTHDAY at CHRISTMAS ! KATHERINE S. FREAS

The missionaries were giving out dolls at Christmas time to the little girls in school. All eyes were following each doll as they came out of the box and went to the one whose name the teacher called. One little girl just couldn't keep her tears back, her name wasn't called and it wasn't called and she was sure the dolls must be about finished in the box. The teacher said, "That is all." She burst into tears. Miss Benner said, "Isn't her name on the roll?" The teacher checked and found she had been missed. The biggest doll had been pushed aside because it was bigger than the others. This one Miss Benner took out of the box and gave to her. She went back to her seat hugging the lovely dolly to her hungry little mother heart. Walking was too slow to get home, all ran and skipped down the street. One father came to me and asked for a box so his two little girls could have a bed for their "babies" to sleep in.— "We thank you "mamas" of America for making it possible for us to have such lovely dollies to love." L. WATKINS

OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS IN CONGO

BERNICE NILES

CHRISTMAS in Congo ! It seemed so strange to us to be preparing for such a day when the thermometer was reaching 90 °F. in the shade. "I'll never be able to get enthusiastic over it," I thought, "without the cold breezes of a New England winter to set the atmosphere." We had arrived at Kikongo just a week before Christmas. Our new colleagues, the Lewis Browns, the Ernest Atkins, Agnes Anderson and Grace Cooper, were busily preparing for the special celebration whenever their already loaded programs would permit. Of course we wanted to help in any way we could. Our baggage and freight had not arrived so we were not yet faced with the task of unpacking and setting up housekeeping.

Our first bit of service was typing and helping to address the French Christmas greetings sent from the Kikongo staff to the Belgian officials and their families living in our area. "Oh my," I wondered, "how will I ever learn to keep all these new names and titles straight and know all the children as well !" Then there was a visit to the White Cross storeroom to help choose gifts for houseboys and girls, for Native workers on the station, and for the district pastors and their families. Agnes Anderson's porch became quite a workshop as piles of dresses, shirts, sheets, towels, boxes of toys and work bags were brought out. A master list had been prepared with the age and sex of each child. For each family a gaily colored sack was filled; a shirt and ball for baby, a dress and doll for little sister, a shirt and harmonica for older brother, a sheet, towel, and soap for mother and father. It was several days before the 50 or 60 sacks were completed because each had to be checked carefully so that no one would be left out. There were delays when the soap, or sheets, or dresses of a certain size ran out and more had to be found. At last it was done and the sacks were separated according to the time and the place they were to be given out.

Friday is always Baby Clinic Day, and on the Friday before Christmas Don and I went with Agnes and her Native nurses on the regular 150 kilometer trip which included four clinics. As usual

each baby was examined and weighed, medicine given out if necessary and soap distributed. But in addition, on this day each mother could choose a small shirt or dress from the table on which many were spread out. What a pretty group of babies smilingly waved to us as we drove away.

The station school was not in session in December so there were no special programs or feasts such as were possible under the old school schedules. However, two parties gave us a great deal of pleasure. One was an evening of fun for all the house boys and girls. They came to our living room and laughed and sang carols around the little artificial Christmas tree which the Atkins had given us. Many cookies and glasses of fruit juice were consumed and then each girl received enough material for a new dress and each boy a new shirt and pocket handkerchief.

On another afternoon we visited Agnes on the occasion of her orphans' Christmas party. There were seven or eight children ranging from 3 months of age to 10 years, and old granny and two or three older girls who help care for the children. Once again solemn faces gave place to smiles of joy when toys and pretty garments were given out. We thought, if only the women at home could see with what pleasure their White Cross gifts were received they would feel well rewarded for their efforts.

On Sunday morning there was a joyous Christmas Service in the church. The poles which support the thatched roof of our wall-less chapel were hidden behind great palm branches to which colorful flowers had been tied. Although we hardly understood a word that was spoken, we knew that the beloved Christmas story was read from the Bible, and we were able to sing all the familiar carols whose words were strange but whose melodies were as thrilling as ever. It was the day before Christmas and I no longer feared the joy which the Advent of Christ always brings would be in any way lacking because of the Congo heat.

Perhaps you wonder if our house was decorated as at home in America. Of course there are no evergreen trees to use in the traditional way, but we were happy to have, as compensation, a poinsettia bush growing just outside our door. One day a very attractive bowl of fruit mysteriously appeared in our living room

and later a large vase filled with colorful forest leaves was delivered to us. These we learned were the result of Grace Cooper's artistic talents. I've already mentioned the small tree that was the gift of the Atkins, completely decorated with tinsel and balls. Under it we put the gifts that had come in the Christmas package from home. With the addition of a few colored candles and greeting cards on the still empty book cases, our room was as festive as we could ever hope for.

Christmas day began for us in a most surprising way. We were awakened at what seemed to us a very early hour, (probably 6 o'clock) by a knock on the door. Answering it we found a girl delivering our Christmas gift from Agnes Anderson; — a mother hen and six baby chicks ! We could understand why she hadn't put that gift under the tree !

All the missionary staff spent the day together. With us also was a young Hungarian couple who live at a commercial post farther down the river and who are invited to Kikongo for every special occasion. We all gathered in the Atkins' living room where a large tree had been so gaily decorated that we scarcely noticed it was covered with leaves instead of needles. Gifts for everyone were to be found underneath it and these were distributed and opened with the usual laughter and cries of surprise.

We were happy to find that a big Christmas dinner with wild fowl and "all the fixings" could be prepared even though we were many miles from any large center. Nothing was lacking that any one could wish for.

A fine day of fellowship came to a close with a period of worship together. Carols were sung, the Christmas story read, and prayers of thanksgiving and praise were offered to the Lord for His marvelous Gift, the author of all joy and happiness.

Christmas in Congo ! Yes, it was a great occasion for us. What a wonderful way to begin our service for Christ in Africa. As we shared in the distributing of gifts in His name, they symbolized to us the Gift of all gifts which we had come to present to our African brothers who need Him so much.

CHRISTMAS 1950

ROLAND G. METZGER

CHRISTMAS Day was the usual busy time at Sona Bata. It all really started the Saturday afternoon and evening before. At that time the meat of a whole beef, the gift of one of the commercial companies near us, was divided. Part went to all the workmen, teachers, nurses, and their families, who live on the station. Part also went to the lepers at Mbemba. To the meat was added some rice, beans, salt, and onions. After the station people had received their shares, a group of missionaries and Congolese assistants drove out to the leper camp at Mbemba to distribute the meat and other food to the nearly 200 out there. That is always the high point of the evening.

The lepers file past, each receiving his or her portion of food. In some their disease is hardly noticeable, but others hobble by on feet which lack toes and hold their dish in hands without fingers. But all are so happy, and there is much joking back and forth. Simple little things set them off into cackles and roars of laughter. It is a wonderful lesson to all of us who have a part in the distribution each year.

Then we cross the tiny valley to the village of the uninfected children of the lepers, who live close but apart from their parents. There the food is all given to the Native woman who acts as matron and does the cooking for them. The little faces are happy and the eyes shine expectantly in the light of the lanterns as the children gaze hungrily on such a large quantity of good food. We finally pull ourselves away, and start back home with the children's song ringing in our ears.

Christmas Day itself, following a very busy Saturday and Sunday, begins with the carollers coming from all parts of the station and meeting at the hospital at 5:30 in the morning. Every group is singing, and as one little band joins another the volume of song increases, until the whole large crowd of over 300 meet outside the hospital. Then in single file the long line threads its way from ward to ward, weaving in and out, until it is difficult to know which is the head. No one is so sick but what they smile as

the carollers move past. Finally the line comes out of the hospital and starts across the valley and to the church. There a short service of praise and thanksgiving is held. In song, prayer, and Scripture reading we remember together the birth of the Christ, God's Son, who came that the lost sinners of every land might be saved. It means so much to our Congo people, those words "every land."

At 10:00 the church is packed and nearly 150 adults and as many more children have to sit outside. Groups of folks have come on foot or in chartered trucks, some from as far as twenty miles. Songs and more songs. My, how joyously they sing. There are songs by the school children, by the hospital nurses, by the workmen, by this group and that. All love to lift their voices in praise to the Lord. The twenty-eight who were baptized on Sunday occupy a prominent place on the front seats. There is a short message by the missionary. Two hours and a half, but there are no signs of restlessness during such a long service. When the final song is finished the people are even reluctant to go and stand around outside the church talking.

In the afternoon there are services at the hospital and at Mbemba. Three truck loads of nurses and others go with the missionary to the leper camp to sing for the people.

All in all it has been a very busy day. By nightfall one is tired, but so happy, and thankful to God that He has called us to serve Him and be His messengers of the Gospel among these people. The Lord is so good to us.

THE BEETS THAT WERE NOT THERE

ROLAND G. METZGER

THE day after Christmas is the missionaries' Christmas, because the 25th is always devoted to our Congo folks. So the next day we rest and spend the time together and as families. In the evening we gather together for our own feast and to play games. One of our Portuguese trader friends gave us a turkey this year, and other friends from home sent out special treats which were pooled and shared. Each household furnished part of the feast.

The great evening has finally arrived and we are seated about the table after the singing of the Doxology. The boys who help in each home are all helping, so dish after dish is passed—roast turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, etc., etc. There just isn't room for any more on our plates, but Vendla Anderson speaks, "I fixed beets. I wonder where they are?"

Emily Satterberg, in whose house we are gathered, tells one of the boys to bring the rest of the food. The boy returns with the mashed potatoes again. "No," says Emily, "The other food." The boy looks blank, and disappears out into the kitchen, not to return.

Vendla says, "I know I fixed them, because I did it myself. I gave the beets to the boy to bring over in the double boiler and told him to warm them up and then put on some butter."

Just then the boy comes back with another dish, and with a queer expression on his face, begins to pass it around. But what is this ? Oatmeal porridge! Before any of us can get over the surprise, Vendla, with a, "I know I sent the beets over," hurries out to the kitchen to look for them herself. In a moment we are all laughing so hard the tears come. Just think, oatmeal for a Christmas feast !

Emily says, "That's queer. I never cook oatmeal. I don't even have any now. Where did the boys ever find it?"

Suddenly someone realizes the truth, and calls Vendla back. "Vendla, did you have oatmeal ready for tomorrow morning's breakfast ?"

"Why, of course," she replies. "I usually have it every morning, and I always prepare it the night before. You don't — suppose – – – ? But I'm sure I gave the boy the beets."

But later, after an evening of much fun and more laughter, the beets were discovered in the double boiler (a second one), set on the back of Vendla's stove, all ready for breakfast !

Oatmeal for Christmas dinner, and "The BEETS THAT WERE NOT THERE."

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine. Proverbs 17-22

It Is More Blessed to Give Than to Receive

GWLADYS R. ATKINS

INDEED my joy was full at our Matondo service last Sunday, when it was decided to present as a gift from the Women's class some twenty-five little shirts, made personally by them.

A Matondo is a Thanksgiving service and a time of great happiness to all attending. Though the program was very full the pastor gave me a short time to speak about the women and their work. They visit people in trouble at the hospital and in the homes. They do evangelistic work on the station and in nearby villages. I spoke of their progress in prayer and Christian living, and finally I held up little shirts, beautifully made by hands that not long ago could hardly thread a needle, tie a knot or take a stitch. They were made from colorful bits of material sent from America.

The pastor asked, "If they had made anything else?" Yes, they had made cushions, pillow slips, table cloths, blouses for themselves and a great deal of embroidery work. A man in the audience asked, "What had been done with the things?" Each woman had kept what she made exchanging peanuts, corn, etc., towards expenses of the class. Another asked, "What are you going to do with the shirts?" We had not decided. Another stood and asked, "Since they had received so much for themselves could they give the shirts as their Matondo gift?" Anna Mukoko was asked to make a reply. She stood and said, "Let them be given to the needy." The whole class stood, and with one accord assented. There was much clapping of hands.

Last Thursday I reminded the women of the years we longed to open work among the Bayaka. Now the Robbins are at Boko and a new station is in the making. Would they like to send the shirts to Mrs. Robbins to use as she finds opportunity? All the women consented and seemed very happy.

You see our women do not have much and their needs are many. It is natural for them to want the things they make for themselves. When they are willing to part with what would have been theirs, we are encouraged and feel that the Spirit of Christ is really in their hearts. Someday we hope to hear them say from the depth of their hearts, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"

DIRECTION

Where goes the way of peace ?
The route of sensing full release
From that which fetters, wounds, destroys,
Then casts aside as outworn toys .....

Where goes the way of strength ?
The means of adding breadth and length
To empty lives of gloom and pain
That miss the rainbow in the rain ....

Where goes the way of power ?
That path of plucking from each hour
The molecules that join to form
The instruments to rule the storm ....

Ever seeking through the haze
Of endless paths within the maze,
Man hopes to stumble in the night
Upon the highway into light,

Sensing not that by his gate
The boulevards of hope await
Man's readiness to guide his course
From lonely haunts to Power's source.

EMILY KEYES

MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF CONGO

DON NILES

ON October 10, 1950, I saw Africa for the first time. I was on the steamer "*Elizabethville*" at the port of Lobito in Angola and was awakened by the noise of workmen. The sun was just rising on the horizon but the number of automobiles and cases on the docks gave evidence that work had been going on for more than an hour. The shuffle of feet on the pavement between the boat and the warehouse was very different from the sound feet usually make. First I wondered if it was due to the echo from the warehouse but as soon as I looked more closely, I realized that it was the sound of bare feet and not shoes, on concrete. I had expected to find the Congolese working in their bare feet and yet I must have thought that the dock workers would be wearing shoes. Perhaps my awareness was due to the contrast between the great powerful derricks which lifted automobiles out of the boat and the barefooted workmen who had not yet received, from contact with civilization, one of the necessities of life, clothing.

The following day we saw the Congo River for the first time. We were sailing in beautifully clear ocean water and then we approached a line of muddy water a great distance from land. This was the Congo River carrying mud and sand by its mighty power far into the ocean.

The first Mission Station we saw was Banza Manteke. I shall never forget that first morning chapel service. All my expectations of Native harmony were met in *a capella* singing. It was at Banza Manteke that we first saw a Native woman carry a stalk of bananas in a basin on her head. We took her picture because she was so graceful as she balanced it. Later at Sona Bata we were given a greater thrill when some girls brought drinking water to our house in pails on their heads and at the same time were crocheting.

We arrived in Congo at the end of the dry season just before the rains began. This is the cold season or winter, as Natives call it, and for that reason we were marveling at the cool temperatures each day. However, since then we have seen some of the Congo heat.

Something that still interests us is the way the Bakongo women carry their babies on their backs and tie them there with a cloth that holds the baby safely even while the mother works. We were especially interested in watching a deaconess in church serve communion one Sunday, with a sleeping baby on her back. The mothers here at Kikongo carry their babies on the hip without a cloth to keep the baby there. When they wish to work, they put the baby on the ground or have someone else hold it. This is why we still remember the women at Sona Bata and Banza Manteke so vividly.

The first regional school we saw was somewhat of a shock. There were no windows or doors. There was a wall about three feet high and an opening near the intersection of two walls forming a doorway. The two end walls and the middle partition, (separating two class rooms,) reached the thatched roof. The seats were logs or a large stick supported by two forked sticks stuck into the ground. The desks were made of several small sticks tied together and supported by four forked sticks stuck into the ground. The students wrote on small slates rather than on paper. The floor of the school building was earth, and again I noticed the bare feet, but I was already becoming used to seeing the people shoeless.

I hope that as you have read these impressions you have seen real people with real needs. I hope too that you have felt a tug at your heart-strings so that you have shared with me the emotions of pity and love for these people, and that you also want to help them.

BLACK AND WHITE

ROLAND G. METZGER

RACE relations ! What I saw from the corner of my eye was proof that the term need never have been invented, ... "Except ye become as little children ....." Thus Jesus supplied the answer. Now I was seeing it in practice.

That morning the necessity had arisen for an immediate trip to Wolter, the railroad station next after Sona Bata toward Léopoldville. At Wolter is also located our local Native chieftainship and government post. But my business was with Mr. Musso who

has a large establishment for the making of cement building-blocks of all types and sizes. We had nearly run out of blocks for the new residence here at Sona Bata. It was necessary to arrange for the delivery of several hundred more if the masons were not soon to be idle.

"Where are you going, Daddy?"

"To Wolter."

"You are going to Wolter, Daddy?"

"Yes, I'm driving to Wolter."

"Paul go to Wolter too."

Parents know that it is nearly impossible to argue with such a decision. So Paul's canvas seat was quickly hooked over the back of the truck's seat. But someone had to go along to look after Paul while Daddy attended to his business. So one of his African friends, Kiala, was asked to play nursemaid. Kiala is my assistant in the evangelistic work. He travels in the district with me. We share in the preaching and all the other phases of the work of supervising the many churches. He does most of the routine keeping of membership records, record of marriages, baptisms, etc. He answers a large share of the hundreds of letters which come to us during the course of a year from the Native Christians and leaders. But above all, he is our friend. So Kiala went along.

Twenty minutes later we were at Wolter, and I was busy talking with Mr. Musso. Nearly forty minutes later I returned to the truck and prepared to start back home. By then it was 11:15, and the sun high in the blue tropical sky was hot. The air was heavy, and a little boy was drowsy. As the car headed back toward Sona Bata the bumpy road could not keep Paul's head from nodding. The interest of many things to see was not sufficient to prop open those two-year-old eyes. A word was spoken to Kiala, and he slipped his arm around the little shoulders. Paul smiled sleepily reached up and with both hands took hold of the hand that was down over his shoulder. Then with a confident sigh he laid his pink and white cheek against the dark chocolate brown arm and drifted off to sleep. "Except ye become as little children ....." Race relations? Paul was showing you and me the way.

Twenty minutes later the truck stopped before our house. Lillian lifted a very sleepy but happy little boy from his seat, and

Kiala flexed a cramped arm. Then both Paul and Kiala, in Kikongo, but with that tone of voice which in any language expresses affection more than words, bid each other farewell. Then the sleepy little voice said, "I like Kiala."

THE IMPRESSIONS OF A NEW MISSIONARY

DR. J. W. WALKER

IT is not always easy to express one's thoughts in words that convey the precise meaning to the reader. It is hoped that you who read these impressions will experience the feeling toward foreign missions that are felt by those who are on the field. It is well for people who actively support missionaries to know conditions as they exist on the field whether or not they are favorable. All of us are prejudiced even though we may consciously try to avoid being that way. The writer attempts to be objective in reporting his first impressions on the mission field.

Since the age of twelve years the writer has been directing his efforts towards service on the foreign mission field. There is a feeling of personal satisfaction in having reached the field, but it is realized that this is not a goal but a stage in which service to Christ is rendered. It must be realized further that service in a foreign country is no more worthy than the service given by a person dedicated to the Lord no matter where he works. It is natural that a new missionary before coming to the field will have formed conceptions of what his eventual work will be like. Probably every newcomer finds that he has formed misconceptions which he rectifies as time goes by.

What about the Native to whom the missionary comes to bring the Gospel and to serve? Here one finds human beings like himself but with distinctly different backgrounds. They speak a foreign language in no way resembling the mother tongue of the missionary. Besides the difference in words there is a difference in thought pattern and modes of behavior which the missionary must try to interpret. The newcomer confronted with these actual conditions can feel quite small and incapable of meet-

ng the needs. Such a setting as he finds could easily lead to a feeling of pessimism; almost a defeatist attitude. Then the question s asked: "Why are you here?" And then the adequate answer presents itself: "Because I have a personal belief in Christ as Lord and Savior and in seeking His will I am content to meet the conditions which present themselves."

The hardships of the foreign missionary today can hardly be compared to the conditions under which his predecessors worked. The new missionary arriving at his station will find permanent brick buildings; a church, a school, a hospital, and house for him to work in and live in. Some earlier missionaries had to build them. One finds cleanly dressed, enthusiastic Natives occupying these buildings. Someone in the past had to reach these people and bring them in.

Do the Natives appreciate the services of the missionary and s the Gospel meaningful to them? It is motivating to the missionary when he senses that his service is genuinely appreciated by the Natives. Such is the feeling at this station. They even ask if there are not other missionaries coming. We try to respond with an evasive answer.

Natives do become Christians, faithful ones, whose lives and work are inspirational. There are some who after a profession of faith stray away and back to their former paths. Do we have to wonder why? If we boast that we are strong Christians we have to admit that there have been strong influences in our environment to help us in being faithful. The Native in most instances has great odds to overcome in maintaining a consistent Christian life. But when he overcomes his obstacles you can be sure his belief is real. As when we call upon a Native medical assistant to pray before we begin an operation he begins by saying, "*Tata Nzambi*" (Father God) just as if he were speaking to someone in the room.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. John 10:10.

CONGO CONFERENCE–A Step Forward in Faith

CHRIST	CENTERED
	O nward and upward
O pportunity — now	N ow — or never
	F aith in God and man
N everfailing love	E nergy — spiritual, mental, physical
	R isk or be left behind
G od's insight	E agerness of the Congo people
	N ew methods
O bligation	C hurch of Christ in Congo
	E nlistment ! The field is white.

A Conference is a growing, a moving thing. This year in the midst of shortages of staff and funds, we met again in conference to continue to plan our ever-increasing growth. We came from all of our stations, tired and even discouraged, and we faced together problems that should have made us more tired and more discouraged. But we faced them together in faith, and each of us returned to his work strengthened by the bonds of hope and love— in this Congo people and their place in the Kingdom of God. Evangelism, medicine, education — we heard the old familiar words, all bound into one reality in Jesus and his growing church in the Congo.

Now — now — now was a very familiar strain. Hesitate now and we shall be too late. We must move onward and upward, or we shall surely slip backward. We cannot stand still. The Congo people want something new and meaningful, and it is now or never. We are *obliged* to do something. Throughout our conference day and night was the urgency of it all. Urgency that keeps pushing us on: risk or lose all.

New methods in the city. New ways on the stations. New roads in the villages. No longer the high and the lowly, the master and the servant, but the friend, Christian love and brotherliness. Changes come everywhere, but they come more rapidly here. Be not dismayed, have faith in God — and man, and walk in love.

Tell the churches and church people at home that faith and love demand that they must match our eagerness and urgency.

Hard or easy times, these are God's times here in Congo. We move— we *must* move —forward with him.

With all this we could do nothing but build vigorous plans. New school buildings, for in the youth and its training is the hope of this church. New hospitals and dispensaries: healthy bodies are God's gift to his people. The expansion of the church, the unity that binds all our departments together. Requests for financial help from our supporting Boards, who back us to the limit. Priorities for new missionaries, and not just one or two, either, to lead and plan our work here. On all this and other innumerable details we worked day and night. And our mutual respect and appreciation grew. In the midst of it all we played together. Fun night, as usual, was tops. The outdoor picnic and the stunts of our newer missionaries tickled us no end. Our babies and young children bound our family close together. Our periods of worship together each day, ending with our annual communion service of recommitment to our work, sealed our friendship.

We are, each of us, back on our own stations Some others have rejoined us since that time. We are still a skeleton staff in a hungry land. Vacations look far away and even in the class of mirages. We still have our nightmares, peculiar to each person, station and situation. But through and above it all is the urgency of the Kingdom of God, the burden which all of us carry humbly and joyfully. The field is white, the call is to all. May we be worthy of it.

CONGO CONFERENCE — A step Forward in Faith !

SEEK YE FIRST

First among persons is Jesus Christ.
First among Books is the Bible.
First among institutions is the Church.
First among the days of the week is the Lord's Day.
First among dollars is the Lord's Tithe.
First in service to society is Winning Souls.

Man Built Houses and Ways versus the True God and His Way

W. F. Robbins

THE curtains are drawn. We are about to look into the past. We will try for a moment to forget that there is any Western Civilization or magnificent sky-scrapers or picturesque farm-houses amidst the acres of a fertile land or quaint, beautiful villages. What we are seeing is Africa. It is Africa stepping out of the past and living in the present.

We are in the village of Koko. It is the center of heathenism for the surrounding area. For many years it has been here and for many years it has been mighty in the propagation of the Christless and Godless social order which has its roots in the dim dark past. Here, great and powerful dignitaries of heathenism meet to discuss ways and means of developing greater and more potent secrets of witchcraft. Were it possible for them to exist in the midst of our western civilization, they might be classed as scientists and doctors for that is what they are in the eyes of the people of this surrounding area. Here abides the most powerful witch-doctor of them all. When we asked him his name he turned to his companions and asked, "What name shall I give him?" The names which I received were "*Mundongo*," "*Zinginging*," "*Zefu*," and "*Nkinzi*."

Koko is a small village and does not boast of more than fifty huts. Like a long-neglected stray dog it nestles on the brow of a low egg-shaped hill; dirty, shaggy, and unfriendly. Some huts are new. Others are falling apart. None of them look as though they could withstand the strong blasts of an angry storm. Some of them, even now, lean so dangerously to one side or the other that it seems to the writer that a tiny push would send them crashing to complete collapse.

At noon time the sun streams mercilessly down on the dry sandy spaces between the huts. There is heat from above and heat from below! One feels as though he will suffocate and the least exertion is too much work. Fortunately, during the afternoon a cooling breeze comes sweeping up from the forested Twana val-

ley below, giving relief and the desire to get a few bits of work done. The evenings are cool and before morning comes it is sometimes so cold that the Natives being without blankets, have to build fires inside their huts. Early evening is the most beautiful time of all. All about are hills and mountains, one rising higher than the other. Bathed in the afternoon sun — their greenness from the lighter shades of the highest hill to the more somber green of the deep valley causes wonder and joy in the heart of the visitor. This joy is mingled with disappointment when one turns back to view the shabby village. One of the occupations here is undoubtedly the raising of tobacco. Each roof has its share of drying tobacco leaves. "Who buys the tobacco?" I asked of a boy near me. "Oh the people of the other villages buy it," he answered. "Do white people ever buy it?" I asked. "Oh yes," he answered, "They buy lots of it." As I spoke to the boy I noticed that his hands were covered with running, blistering sores. I don't suppose that those who smoke the cigarettes made from these leaves ever think of the possibility of unwashed hands and running sores which have handled them.

Fetish houses abound. Yet there are fewer than there were two and a half years ago, when we arrived here. They are little houses about three feet in diameter and three and a half feet high. This indicates another industry — the making and selling of fetishes.

The Heavenly Artist has touched this little village with a little bit of His glory, too. There were two followers of Christ here. One died just this last week leaving one to be His witness. His glory is still shining here and we look to the day when His light will come to more of these darkened hearts.

As I entered the village, I was alone. There were people there but they were occupied. I wrote several notes without any one interrupting me. Finally, spying a group of men I went toward them. A boy came toward me. He stretched out his hand but it was so dirty that I had no desire to take it in mine. So I softly clapped my hands which is the politest way possible to say, "How do you do," according to Native customs. And this way is so much more hygienic than our American pump handle method. The boy clapped in return and the salutation was most graciously terminated.

The group of men toward which I walked proved to be th most reverend representatives of the most unholy worship o witchcraft. Ties and priestly collars? No there were none. All with one exception wore nothing above his waist. Instead of wel creased and well cared for trousers they wore greasy, evil smellin skirts of varying lengths. Some time in the dim past they wer probably of varying colors, too. The one exception to this semi nakedness was a man who wore a bright red, very heavy woole coat. That coat probably never leaves his back. It never gets wash ed or cleaned. In the cool of the night he is comforted by it. I the heat of the day no power can make him take it off and thoug his body is dripping with perspiration, he will assure you that h is very comfortable.

I knew some of the men because I had contacted them in m work. Two years ago, Dr. Muncy of Central Baptist Seminary Missouri, was with me when we visited this very village. We ha seen some of these very men. At that time Dr. Muncy had tol the great witch-doctor about Christ and he had indicated a desir to follow him.

There were no smiles when I approached them. Ver seriously, I gave the greeting, clapping my hands softly and say ing, "Good to you." They returned the greeting by clapping softl also. Then one of them said, "Good to you Tata Lobbings." smiled and said something in Kiyaka, their Native tongue. Pe culiar isn't it but people love to be spoken to in their own tongu especially when spoken by one whose pronunciation is not quit perfect. There was a laugh and the ice was broken. A chair wa offered me. Some twenty odd children gathered about us contin ually pushing closer to get a good view of the white spectacle wh had arrived among them. All of them were naked. Boys and girl alike wore no clothes. In age they ranged from four to eleven years The teen-age boys and girls wear scarcely more—only a loin cloth The last ones to bid me well were two young men in their twenties They were fully and nicely clothed and they were quite consciou of themselves. It was quite apparent that they thought that the were among the finest of God's creations. Potentially, they are!

After the greetings there was a moment of quietness. It wa difficult to know where to begin. Finally I said to the witch-doctor

"Do you know when I saw you last?" "Yes," he answered, "You were with another white man." (That was Dr. Muncy) He continued, "You have been here several times since that day to see me but I have never been here. I am thinking of preparing a gift for you. I had really planned to take a hen and some eggs to you before this but I have always been delayed." "Look here, Witch-doctor," I said "I don't want any gift but I am thinking of you and your life. Did you not express yourself as wishing to follow the Lord Jesus Christ when Dr. Muncy was here? I would be happy if you gave me no gift at all but you surrendered your life completely into the hands of the Savior." I could see that he was touched by my interest in him. "Ah, white man," he said, "It is so difficult to understand. I cannot understand the Gods of the white men. The Roman Catholic priest comes and shows us his way. You of the Mission come and show us your way. Which is the way? Which of the white men's gods shall we follow?"

"Witch-doctor," I answered, I don't want you to follow any white man's god. I want you to follow the true God. Who gives you the sun and the rain? Who makes your manioc, your bananas, your pineapple and your corn and peanuts grow? Is it a god from the white man's country who does that?" "No," he answered. "Our God gives us these things." "He is the God I am talking to you about," I answered. "You have been thinking that He cared nothing about you. You have been thinking that he is far away and wishes only to harm you. But He is the true God and He loves you. It was for you and for me that he sent His son from heaven. That Son is God's gift to you. On a cross, he died for you. He wants you to leave your sins so that He may forgive you. He wants to forgive your past sins and carry them himself but He cannot forgive you if you have only the desire to persist in your sins." "Ah, but Tata," he said, "it is so hard." "Look, let me tell you a story," I answered. "Some people were travelling out in the grass-land. Out there in the tall grass there was a leopard. He saw a little child there with the family. Creeping stealthily and unnoticed up to the little child he pounced upon her, carried her off, killed her and ate her. Now there were some wise hunters in that same grassland who saw what the leopard had done. They set about to trap the leopard and trap him they did. They brought

him before the judges of the court and he was tried for murder and the eating of a child. He pleaded guilty. Standing before the court he confessed all his sins and asked for pardon. What do you think their judgment was? What would you have given as judgment if you had been in their places?" The old witch-doctor and all those with him had decision written all over their faces. "Die, he must die," they answered in chorus. "Yes," I agreed, "and you have passed that judgment because you know that the leopard will never change his ways. Is that not so? If that leopard had said with conviction that he would change his ways, and he asked you for a month's trial and he promised to find and bring alive into the village any of your children who got lost in the forest or the grasslands, and he promised faithfully that he would do this to the end of his life, would you not consider giving him another chance? If you knew that he really meant what he said and that he would be as good as his word, wouldn't you try him?" Hesitatingly they answered, "Yes." "Now," I said, "that is God's way too. God cannot condone sin. God and sin are enemies. Christ died on the cross to destroy sin. The Old Testament shows us that he who sins is worthy of death and must die. Christ said that he had come, not to destroy the law but to fullfill it. So the Christ who died for us on the cross is agreed with the standards of the Old Testament. All of us have sinned and have come short of the glory of God. Christ cannot forgive sin nor the one who wishes to persist in sin, but Christ can and does forgive the sinner who repents of his sin and in the strength of the holy spirit turns his back on sin, and forever becomes a follower of Christ. The decision in the heavenly courts is that sin must die. If you of your own volition have such faith in Christ that you desire to die to your old life and all the old sins and you are able to say as Paul did, 'I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me,' then Christ forgives you and cleanses you and through His cross makes you worthy of eternal life and fellowship with him. Do you understand, witch-doctor?" "Yes," he said, "a little bit." "But I find it so hard," he continued. "I have never told you that I was once baptized by a Catholic village teacher. I was very sick. I did not know what was happening. I was not conscious when he baptized me. Others told me about it afterward. I seemed to get better from that time and

I have not been sick since. They told me that I was saved."

I tried again. "Witch-doctor, you have continued in sin since then. You know God's Word asks the question, 'shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?' The answer is a definite, 'NO!' So far, witch-doctor you have paid no attention to God. If I were to come into this village and go first to one ordinary villager and then to another and another but I did not come near you or the chief, would you like that? No, you wouldn't. You would say, we are the leaders of this village. Those other people are nobodies. Why does he go only to them and does not come to us. God is saying that same thing. Look at your fetishes. Look at your fetish houses. They are in evidence everywhere but where is God's house? I am sure that God is looking down on this village and asking; 'why are they worshipping these useless fetishes and building these useless fetish-houses? Why do they walk right by me and pay no attention to me? Why do they not have a house of worship in which they may come and talk to me?'" The greying witch-doctor looked thoughtful. He said, "I have never thought of it that way before. White man we will build a house of worship for the true God." Once more I persisted with him as gently as possible. "Witch-doctor, do you know what the loving God wants most of all? He wants to place His throne in YOUR heart. He wants YOU to leave the old ways and the old sins and the old man. He wants you to be His in order that He may give you life and love and light. Witch-doctor, don't you want to accept Him and leave your sins?" A very serious man clapped his hands very softly and nodded, "Yes."

I know that the witch-doctor heard today. I believe that he understood a bit of what salvation is. Continue to pray for him, all you, our friends. After prayer I left the village of Koko but I am going back soon ! I desire with all my heart to see this man saved in Christ !

STATION NEWS NOTES

LEOPOLDVILLE—Two songs have set our ears to ringing these last two months — Conference and Fair. Before one was over the other began. And only now are we beginning to slow down from its brisk pace.

The conference came to us this year. Fun night, as usual, was our very own out here on the banks of Stanley Pool, within sound of the rapids. The rest of the sessions we loaned to LECO, the Protestant Bookstore.

As for the Commercial Fair at Léopoldville, the world came to us for that. Annis Ford came up from Banza Manteke. We had pictures and work in the kindergarten booth, and the display of girls' school work. We had more active parts in contributing to and helping arrange the protestant church booth, the protestant medical work section, and the primary school display. Four mornings our school children — different grades each day — went to learn from the fair of their own country and the work of the rest of the world. One day we met the school children from Kimpese, another those from Banza Manteke, and the last day those from Sona Bata.

A well-placed vacation of two weeks is giving us a chance to get caught up on our work. Not vacation, but different work.

BANZA MANTEKE—The Church at Banza Manteke is deeply concerned over a new movement called KINKUKUSA which is sweeping over our entire area. It seems to be a combination of old heathen practices plus new ones. As the tribe is decreasing in authority this movement is attempting to regain it. Natives working in the cities and elsewhere are urged to return to their villages to KUKUSA, those who do not are considered sorcerers. If any calamity happens in the village it is the fault of those who refuse to KUKUSA. Soil is taken from the grave of the oldest ancestor, a cross is made of this in front of the Church, nails are put on it and then the people dance all night while nobody is permitted to enter his hut, then an oath is taken. It is said that within six months more will be done in pledging loyalty to the tribe.

The building program is going forward, the *école ménagère* is ready for occupancy, dormitories are being occupied as well as houses for Native personnel, a new residence is being built. All in all Banza Manteke is moving right along.

We miss Mary Bonar very much. Our prayers are that she will have a restful furlough and return to carry on the school work which is progressing so well. Miss Annis Ford will have the efficient help of Remy Malutama who has been studying in the French Camerouns.

Banza Manteke has had many visitors. It was especially interesting to have Dr. Ralph Johnson.

MOANZA—Miss Eldredge and Miss Jorgenson returned to Moanza August 6th, having been away for 5 weeks. We spent a busy two weeks at Leopoldville attending conference, two weeks at Tondo having a delightful vacation and the rest of the time travelling. We enjoyed precious fellowship with our B. M. S. friends at Tondo, and were happy to meet the many D. C. C. M. friends who were gathered for conference at Bolenge, as we passed through on our way back to the Kwango. Some unseen power was trying to hinder our return, but we thank God that He kept us from serious harm, in an auto accident near Bolenge, as well as on the road between Vanga and Moanza, where we ran into grass fires. We are grateful to Don Niles and the Kikongo chauffeur for coming to take us from Vanga to Moanza. Now we are here with two trucks, but no chauffeur, awaiting the coming of our colleagues who are on furlough.

Miss Eldredge seems to keep busy with two Station schools, church matters coming in from eight church centers, upkeep of the Station, getting the finishing touches put on a large mud and wattle building which was started in April, and which is to be used as a junior church and for class rooms. In the hospital we have tried to minister to those who have sought our help. The wife of a former nurse, has been seriously ill all through the month of August, and is still in grave danger. Two of our young nurse's aids have had to leave because of sin. We pray that God may help them to repent and seek the way of truth and holiness again.

We had a visit from our local Territorial Agent and a place

was secured for a fish pond. We trust that this project will be a success and that we may have fish for school and hospital in the next year.

NOTES—Rev. and Mrs. Ernest Atkins left for furlough in early July.— Mrs. H. D. Brown, Donald and Douglas; Mrs. G. W. Tuttle, Dean and Louise arrived from America on the 7th of August.—Rev. and Mrs. Chester Jump and little five month old Karen Jane arrived from Belgium the 11th of September.— Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Smith arrived from America on the 19th of September. A warm welcome is assured to each one as they take up the multitudinous tasks awaiting them.

Mary Ann arrived at the home of Dr. and Mrs. J. W. Walker on September 10th. We all give her a warm welcome into our Congo circle.

CHRISTMAS PEACE

"*His name shall be called*
. . . . . The Prince of Peace"
Isaiah 9:6

The gift of the greatest love,
The calm of the deepest peace,
The comfort of the sweetest hope
Be yours this
CHRISTMAS DAY.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

How happy we are that we have returned in time to meet the dead line for the Christmas number of CONGO NEWS LETTER. Although we have been in Congo only a week, furlough seems like a dream.

Celebrating Christ's birth, which took place so many years ago, ceases to be meaningful unless we can also rejoice in the fact that He is being born anew in the hearts of those who never before knew Him.

Happy as we are to be back in Congo, we are distressed as we look upon the faces of our overworked and discouraged colleagues. The challenge of open doors is greater than ever before, yet we find ourselves with fewer missionaries than we had twenty years ago. Our conference asked for 33 new missionaries to meet the needs of the work at the already established stations. Large portions of this Congo field, which American Baptists promised to evangelize, are still without the gospel witness. Yet only one new missionary for the Congo was presented at the 1951 American Baptist Convention!

We urgently need doctors, nurses, builders, educational workers, preachers and office workers. Our God is not a God of confusion. He has not opened these doors without having prepared and called those who should enter them.

As you rejoice this Christmas season in the coming of the Christ Child, won't you pledge yourself to work and pray definitely that young people may be forthcoming from among those of your acquaintance to join forces with us ?

How can we say "Merry Christmas" to one another, when we know that Christmas is being denied to thousands whom we promised to tell of the Birth of the Saviour; He who is their Saviour as well as ours !

May this Christmas bring a special blessing to you as you do your part to see that this critical need for new missionaries is met.

CHARLES AND VIOLA SMITH

BELGIAN CONGO MISSION DIRECTORY
with P. O. addresses*

BANZA MANTEKE
via Matadi
Miss Esther Ehnbom, R.N.
Miss Annis Ford
Dr. and Mrs. H. M. Freas
Rev. and Mrs. Philip Uhlinger
Rev. and Mrs. H. D. Brown

BOKO
via Popokabaka et Inkisi
Rev. and Mrs. W. F. Robbins
Miss Eva Shepard

KIKONGO *sur Wamba*
via Banningville
Rev. and Mrs. L. A. Brown
Miss Grace Cooper
Rev. and Mrs. Donald Niles
Miss Dorothy Wiseman, R.N.

E.P.I. KIMPESE
via Matadi
Rev. and Mrs. H. Erickson
Rev. and Mrs. E. G. Hall

LEOPOLDVILLE II
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Rev. Phyllis Benner
Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Watkins

MOANZA *sur Inzia,*
via Masi-Manimba
Miss Marguerite Eldredge
Miss Alice Jorgenson, R.N.
Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Smith

SONA BATA
via Matadi
Miss Vendla Anderson
Rev. and Mrs. R. G. Metzge
Dr. and Mrs. G. W. Tuttle
Dr. and Mrs. John W. Walker

VANGA *sur Kwilu,*
via Banningville
Rev. and Mrs. C. J. Jump
Dr. and Mrs. A. C. Osterholm
Miss Doris Wiseman

LECO, CONGO BOOK SHOP
B. P. 123 Léo-Est
Rev. and Mrs. G. W. Carpente

ON FURLOUGH

Miss Agnes Anderson, R.N.
Rev. E. and G. Atkins
Miss Mary Bonar
Rev. and Mrs. Edwin Boone
Rev. and Mrs. T. E. Bubeck
Rev. and Mrs. M. S. Engwall
Miss Helen Gaskill
Miss Jean Luckey
Miss Emily Satterberg, R.N

STUDY IN BELGIUM

Miss Emily Keyes
Dr. Carrie Sprague
Rev. and Mrs. Edward V. Wright

* *Precede name of each station with A.B.F.M.S., except Kimpese*